CRIME

NO. 12

CRIME SUSPENSTORIES

10¢

COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE!
AN ILLUSTRATED TERROR-TALE FROM THE HAUNT OF FEAR!

THE EXECUTION!

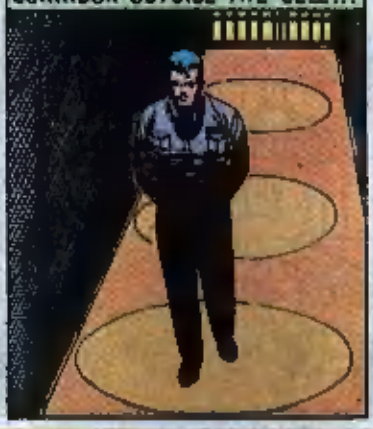
THIS IS THE STORY OF A MAN'S LAST DAY IN PRISON. FOR 219 DAYS INMATE NO. 82662 OCCUPIED CELL 7 IN CELL BLOCK "D", AND THOUGHT OF THE 220TH DAY... WHEN, AS FAR AS SOCIETY WAS CONCERNED, HIS SLATE WOULD BE WIPED CLEAN!

THIS, THEN, IS THE 220TH DAY. NO. 82662 IS SCHEDULED TO DIE IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR TONIGHT...

6:30 A.M. THE CLANGING OF A GREAT BELL ROUSES NO.82562 FROM A NIGHTMARISH SLEEP, AND THE LAST DAY BEGINS...
CLANGLANGLANG
7:00 A.M. HE IS WASHED, DRESSED, AND STANDING IN THE FRONT OF HIS CELL FOR THE DAY'S 'COUNT'...
7:35 A.M. HE RECEIVES BREAKFAST. A 'TRUSTY' SLIPS THE TRAY UNDER THE BARS. CEREAL, EGGS, TOAST, JUICE, TWO GLASSES OF MILK, AND COFFEE. PLENTY OF LIQUIDS...
HE SITS ON THE NARROW COT, THE TRAY BALANCED ON HIS KNEES. AND AS HE SLOWLY EATS, HE THINKS BACK TO THE NIGHT HE HAD BEEN DRIVING IN THAT TERRIBLE SNOW STORM... AND HAD CHANCED UPON ANOTHER DRIVER IN TROUBLE...
...SKID INTO A SNOWBANK?
YES! I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU'D HELP ME GET BACK ON THE ROAD!
IT TOOK THEM A HALF-HOUR TO GET THE CAR ON THE ROAD... A HALF-HOUR OF DIGGING, PUSHING AND KNEELING IN THE SNOW... AND WHEN IT WAS DONE, THEY HAD SMOKED AND TALKED TOGETHER...
...HEADING OUT WEST, YOU SAY?
THAT'S RIGHT. MY JOB WAS MAKING ME A NERVOUS WRECK! DOCTOR SAYS I NEED A GOOD, LONG REST!
SAY! LOOK AT THE TIME! IT'S TEN AFTER EIGHT! I'D BETTER GET GOING!
DIDN'T REALIZE I'D KEPT YOU ALMOST AN HOUR! WELL, THANKS AGAIN, FRIEND. I HOPE I CAN RETURN THE FAVOR SOMEDAY...
8:00 A.M. RETURN THE FAVOR? TODAY WOULD BE A PERFECT DAY FOR IT... FOR THAT MAN IS THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN SAVE INMATE NO. 82562 FROM THE ELECTRIC CHAIR...
TICK TOCK
2

8:15 A.M. HE IS GIVEN A SHAVE... AND CLEAN CLOTHES TO DIE IN! A 'TRUSTY' WIELDS THE RAZOR...

9:00 A.M. EXERCISE PERIOD... ONE HOUR. HE SLOWLY PACES THE NARROW, WIRE-SCREENED CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE CELL...



THE OTHER 'DEATHERS' IN THEIR CELLS WATCH HIM AS HE WALKS BACK AND FORTH. THIS IS *HIS* DAY... AND THE EVER-PRESENT GUARDS ARE WATCHING ALSO...

10:15 A.M. LUNCH... A BIG LUNCH, BUT SMALL APPETITE! EXTRA MILK. EXTRA COFFEE. *PLENTY OF LIQUIDS*...AND PLENTY OF TIME TO RECALL THAT NIGHT IN THE SNOWSTORM WHEN HE WAS STOPPED BY THE POLICE...

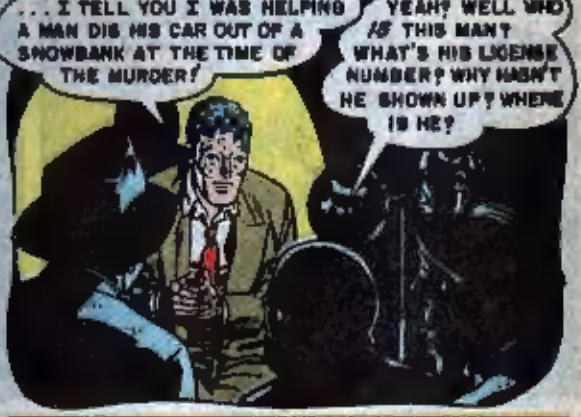
WHA...WHAT'S THE MATTER, OFFICERS?

GET OUT WITH YOUR HANDS UP! YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR *MURDER!*

A YOUNG WOMAN HAD BEEN KILLED. FROM NEIGHBORS INFORMATION AND STRONG CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE, A WEB OF GUILT WAS WOVEN AROUND HIM FROM WHICH THERE WAS BUT ONE WAY OUT...

...I TELL YOU I WAS HELPING A MAN DIG HIS CAR OUT OF A SNOWBANK AT THE TIME OF THE MURDER!

YEAH? WELL, WHO *IS* THIS MAN? WHAT'S HIS LICENSE NUMBER? WHY HASN'T HE SHOWN UP? WHERE IS HE?



A MILLION QUESTIONS... BUT NO ANSWERS. NAME? LICENSE NUMBER? HE DIDN'T KNOW. A MISSING, UNIDENTIFIED WITNESS WHO COULD SAVE HIS LIFE! THAT MAN WAS *SOMEWHERE*...AND NOWHERE...

FIND HIM! FIND HIM! HE'LL TELL YOU THE *TRUTH!*

WHY DON'T YOU STOP IT? YOU KNOW YOU JUST MADE HIM UP TO GIVE YOURSELF AN ALIBI! BUT YOU'LL GET THE CHAIR ANYWAY!

11:00 A.M. A FRIGHTENING THOUGHT, TO DIE IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR, EVEN TO A HARDENED, RUTHLESS CRIMINAL. HOW MUCH MORE FRIGHTENING THEN, TO MR. BESSE, WHO IS A COMPLETELY *INNOCENT* MAN?

11:30 A.M. HE LIES ON HIS COT AND STARES BLANKLY UP AT THE GREY STONE CEILING... HE SMOKES...
12:00 NOON. VOLUNTARY EXERCISE PERIOD. HE LIES ON THE COT, AND LISTENS TO THE SOUND OF THE PRISONERS' MARCHING. A GUARD BRINGS HIM SOME ORANGE JUICE.
12:30 P.M. HE TRIES TO READ A BOOK, TOSSES IT ASIDE, LIGHTS ANOTHER CIGARETTE...
TICK TOCK
TICK TOCK
TICK TOCK
TICK TOCK
TICK TOCK
TICK TOCK
TICK TOCK
TICK TOCK
1:00 P.M. VISITORS' PERIOD. HIS WIFE ENTERS THE CELL, RUSHES INTO HIS ARMS. HIS LAWYER IS WITH HER. A SLIGHT GESTURE... ALL HOPE IS GONE...
HE SITS ON THE COT WITH HIS WIFE AND TRIES TO SMILE, TO TALK OF OTHER, PLEASANTER THINGS. BUT WHEN HE LOOKS DEEP INTO HER BLOODSHOT, TEAR-BRIMMED EYES, HE KNOWS SHE ISN'T FOOLED... NOT ONE BIT! NO ONE IS!
3:00 P.M. VISITORS' PERIOD IS OVER. THE GUARD OPENS THE CELL DOOR, AND NO. 82552 FORCES HIMSELF TO SMILE BRAVELY AS HE SAYS GOOD-BYE. THE LAWYER AND GUARD LEAD HER AWAY. HE'LL NEVER SEE HIS WIFE AGAIN....

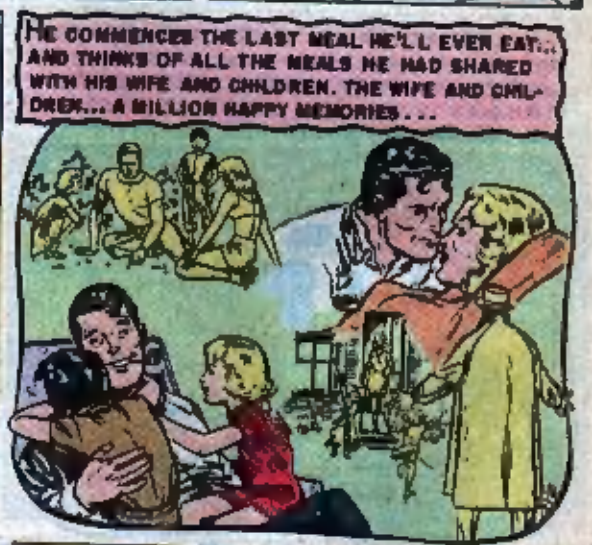
3:30 P.M. HE GIVES A GUARD A SLIP OF PAPER. ON IT IS WRITTEN THE REQUESTS FOR HIS LAST MEAL...
3:45 P.M. HE LIGHTS ANOTHER CIGARETTE AND STARES THROUGH THE BARRED WINDOW. ACROSS THE PRISON YARD HE CAN SEE THE DEATH HOUSE...
HE THINKS... AND LIKE THE HUNDREDS OF TIMES BEFORE, HE THINKS ABOUT WHAT HE SUPPOSES *REALLY* TOOK PLACE THE NIGHT OF THE MURDER...
A JEALOUS SUITOR HAD WAITED... AND WHEN THE GIRL HAD RETURNED FROM A GAY EVENING WITH ANOTHER MAN, AN ARGUMENT FLARED. THEY HAD STRUGGLED IN THE SNOW BEHIND HER HOUSE... AND THE MAN HAD KILLED HER THERE!
NEIGHBORS HAD SEEN THE MURDERER RACE TO HIS CAR AND DRIVE OFF. THEIR DESCRIPTION... HEIGHT WEIGHT, BUILD, CLOTHING, AUTO... ALL HAD FITTED NO. 62562 PERFECTLY... HE WAS *TRAPPED!*
4:30 P.M. THE PRISON CHAPLAIN ARRIVES, AND NO. 62562 POURS OUT HIS SOUL TO THE ONLY PERSON INSIDE THE WALLS WHO WILL LISTEN, UNDERSTAND... AND BELIEVE! THE TRIAL...
'EQUALITY UNDER LAW'! HOLLOW WORDS NOW. THE TRIAL HAD BEEN A NIGHTMARE!
GUILTY!

5:00 P.M. THE LAST 'MILE' BEGINS.

5:03 P.M. ACROSS THE COURTYARD... STRAIGHT TO THE DEATH HOUSE...

5:05 P.M. HE ENTERS THE DEATH CELL. THE LAST MEAL IS WAITING.

A KNIFE AND FORK THIS TIME... NOT JUST A SPOON. HIS FAVORITE MEAL... JUICE, CHICKEN CONSOMME, T-BONE STEAK, POTATOES, STRING BEANS, CHOCOLATE PUDDING, LARGE MILK, AND COFFEE. *PLENTY OF LIQUIDS*... IT HELPS THE CHAIR DO ITS WORK *QUICKER*...


HE COMMENCES THE LAST MEAL HE'LL EVER EAT... AND THINKS OF ALL THE MEALS HE HAD SHARED WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN. THE WIFE AND CHILDREN... A MILLION HAPPY MEMORIES...

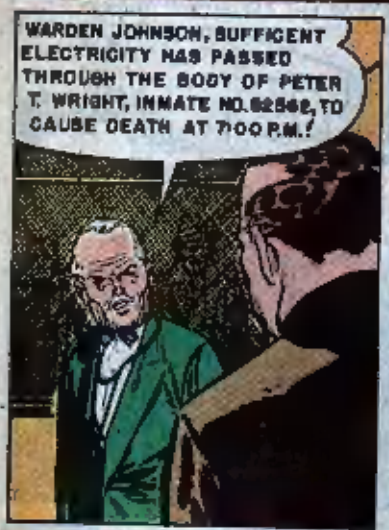
5:40 P.M. A GUARD COMES, TO SHAVE HIS HEAD. THE CHAPLAIN PRAYS...
CLIP! CLIP! CLIP! CLIP! CLIP!

TESTING...
CLIP! CLIP! CLIP! CLIP!

6:00 P.M. THE FINAL HOUR BEGINS...
WHY DO THEY WANT TO KILL ME? I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING... WHERE'S THAT WITNESS? WHY DOESN'T HE COME?
6:15 P.M.
...IN THE MOVIES, THE HERO ALWAYS IS SAVED AT THE LAST MINUTE...
6:30 P.M.
THERE'S STILL TIME! WHERE'S THAT WITNESS? WHERE IS HE?!!
6:45 P.M.
WHY DOESN'T HE HELP ME? WHERE IS HE? WHERE? WHERE?
WHERE?
6:50 P.M. A SINGLE KNOCK ON THE DOOR. IT'S TIME...
6:54 P.M. HE ENTERS THE EXECUTION CHAMBER...
6:58 P.M. HE IS STRAPPED TO THE CHAIR. THE MASK IS PUT OVER HIS FACE...
7:00 P.M.
OFF
ON

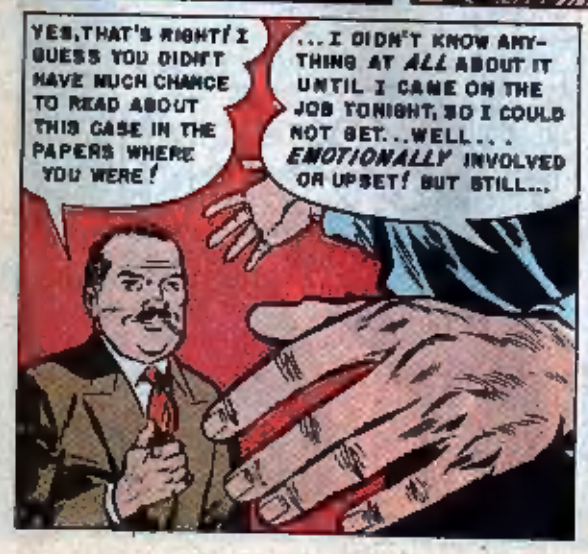
7:01 P.M.

7:03 P.M. THE PRISON DOCTOR STEPS FORWARD TO EXAMINE THE BODY...


WARDEN JOHNSON, SUFFICENT ELECTRICITY HAS PASSED THROUGH THE BODY OF PETER T. WRIGHT, INMATE NO.62568, TO CAUSE DEATH AT 7:00 P.M.!

WELL, IT'S OVER! NOW I HAVE TO SEE HOW CHIEF ENGINEER ALVIS STOOD UP UNDER IT!
ALVIS? OH, YES... HE'S THE ONE WHO ALWAYS FEELS SORRY FOR THESE CONDEMNED MEN!

THE WARDEN STEPS THROUGH A DOOR, INTO THE CONTROL ROOM...
WELL, ALVIS, HOW DID IT GO, THIS TIME?
NOT TOO BAD! THIS IS MY FIRST DAY BACK ON THE JOB!

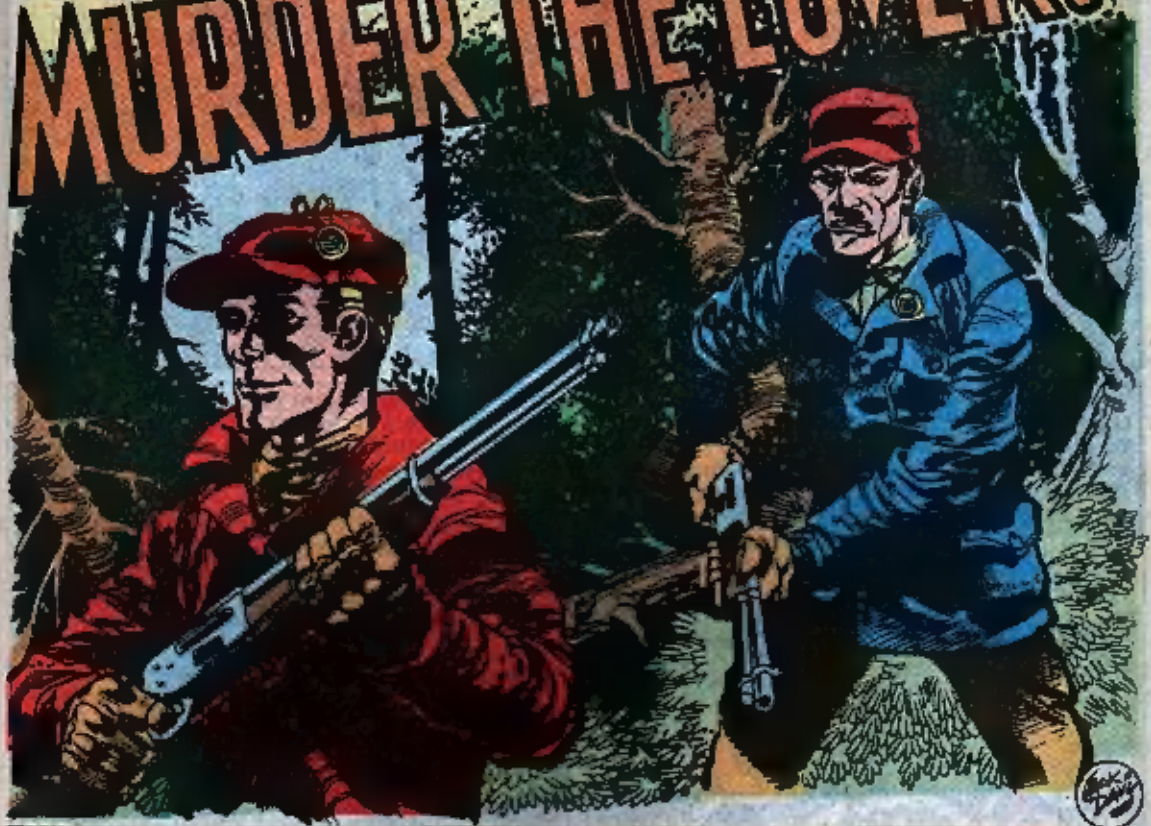

YES, THAT'S RIGHT! I GUESS YOU DIDN'T HAVE MUCH CHANCE TO READ ABOUT THIS CASE IN THE PAPERS WHERE YOU WERE!
...I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING AT ALL ABOUT IT UNTIL I CAME ON THE JOB TONIGHT, SO I COULD NOT GET...WELL... EMOTIONALLY INVOLVED OR UPSET! BUT STILL...

I...I WISH THERE WAS SOMETHING I COULD HAVE DONE TO HELP HIM!

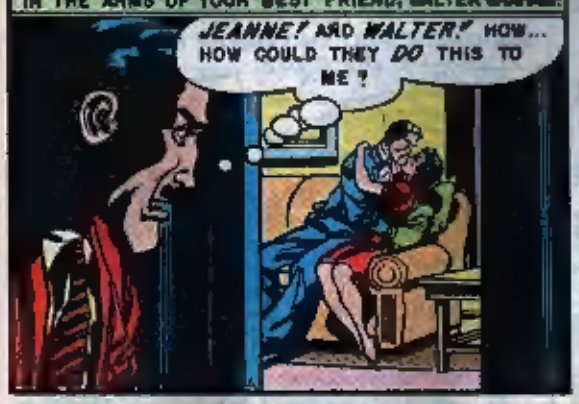
THE FOLLOWING PAIR OF 'E.C. QUICKIES' POSES TWO PROBLEMS! THE FIRST ONE IS...

GIVEN: THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE!
TO FIND: A WAY OUT!
METHOD:

MURDER THE LOVER!



IN THIS FIRST 'E.C. QUICKIE', YOU'RE *KENNETH MARTIN*, A WEALTHY BUSINESSMAN! YOU'RE IN YOUR LATE THIRTIES, HAPPILY MARRIED, AND MADLY IN LOVE WITH YOUR BEAUTIFUL WIFE, JEANNE! BUT ONE DAY YOU COME HOME FROM A BUSINESS TRIP EARLIER THAN EXPECTED, AND YOU FIND JEANNE IN IN THE ARMS OF YOUR BEST FRIEND, WALTER GRAHAM!



AT FIRST YOU'RE HURT... *TERRIBLY* HURT! YOU SLIP OUT AGAIN WITHOUT BEING SEEN AND WALK THE STREETS! AND YOU THINK! YOUR BRAIN IS FILLED WITH A THOUSAND FRIGHTENING THOUGHTS! YOUR HURT TURNS TO *PANIC*... AND THEN TO *HATE!* SO YOU MAKE UP YOUR MIND...

YOU MAKE YOUR PLANS, KENNETH MARTIN! YOU MAKE YOUR PLANS TO KILL YOUR BEST FRIEND, WALTER! AND IT DOESN'T TAKE LONG BEFORE YOU BEGIN PUTTING YOUR PLANS INTO OPERATION...

HELLO, WALT? THIS IS KEN! HOW ARE YOU, BOY? OH, I'VE BEEN OUT OF TOWN ON BUSINESS! SAY! I WAS THINKING, WALT...

THE MOOSE SEASON OPENS THIS WEEK... WHERE WE HAVE OUR SUMMER PLACE! HOW ABOUT GOING UP FOR A FEW DAYS... DO A LITTLE HUNTING?

YOUR PLAN IS SIMPLE, ISN'T IT, KENNETH? *HUNTING ACCIDENTS* ARE VERY *COMMON*, AREN'T THEY? IT'S GOING TO BE SUCH A *TRAGIC ERROR*, ISN'T IT, WHEN YOU SHOOT WALTER... 'MISTAKING' HIM FOR A *MOOSE*?...

HOW MUCH LONGER IS IT, KEN?

ONLY A FEW MORE MILES, WALT!

YOU WATCH YOURSELF VERY CAREFULLY DURING THE LONG TRIP UP TO YOUR LODGE! YOU MUSTN'T LET ON TO WALT THAT YOU HAVE THE SLIGHTEST INKLING OF WHAT'S GOING ON BETWEEN HIS AND JEANNE! AND IT'S HARD TO CONTROL YOURSELF, ISN'T IT, WHEN WALT ASKS...

HOW'S JEANNE THESE DAYS, KEN? I HAVEN'T SEEN HER SINCE BEFORE YOUR TRIP!

OH, SHE'S FINE... JUST *FINE!*

YOU'D LIKE TO SPIT IN HIS EYE, WOULDN'T YOU, KEN? IT MAKES YOUR *BLOOD BOIL* TO HEAR HIM TALK SO CASUALLY ABOUT JEANNE, WHEN ALL THE WHILE HE'S BEEN HAVING AN *AFFAIR* WITH HER... DOESN'T IT? BUT YOU STEEL YOURSELF... KNOWING THAT IN A DAY OR SO YOU'LL HAVE YOUR *REVENGE*...

WELL, HERE WE ARE, WALT! LIKE THE PLACE?

LOVELY, KEN! RIGHT ON A LAKE, TOO! YOU AND JEANNE MUST BE AWFULLY HAPPY HERE DURING THE SUMMER...

YES, YOU AND JEANNE *HAVE* BEEN HAPPY HERE IN PAST SUMMERS, HAVEN'T YOU, KEN? AND YOU'LL *BE* HAPPY *AGAIN*... NEXT SUMMER, TOO! *YOU'RE* GOING TO *SEE* TO *THAT*...

WHAT'S THE LAKE CALLED AGAIN?

IT'S CALLED 'LAKE NAPOLONA,' WALT! IT'S AN OLD *INDIAN* NAME MEANING *LAKE OF ALL WATER!*

OH, YEAH! I REMEMBER NOW! YOU TOLD ME ABOUT IT! ISN'T THERE A SPOT OUT THERE THAT THE INDIANS USED TO BELIEVE HAD *NO BOTTOM*, BUT THAT IS ACTUALLY JUST *VERY DEEP?* YOU MENTIONED THAT SOMEONE *DROWNED* LAST SUMMER, AND THAT THEY *NEVER RECOVERED HIS BODY!*

YES! IT'S *TOO DEEP* TO *DRAG* FOR A BODY OUT THERE! WELL...SHALL WE GO IN?

SURE THING, KEN!

YOU AND WALT UNLOAD THE THINGS FROM THE TRUNK, AND YOU GO INSIDE! WITHIN AN HOUR, YOU'RE BOTH SITTING BEFORE A CHEERY FIRE! ONLY YOU'RE NOT VERY CHEERFUL, ARE YOU, KEN?...

THIS IS *NICE* HERE! YOU'RE A *LUCKY GUY*, KEN!

LUCKY, WALT?

TO BE ABLE TO *AFFORD* THIS *LUXURY*, I MEAN!

I GUESS I AM, WALT! I *GUESS I AM!*

YOU HAVE DIFFICULTY SLEEPING THAT NIGHT, DON'T YOU, KEN? YOU KEEP TOSSING AND TURNING...HEARING WALT'S WORDS...RINGING IN YOUR EARS! "YOU'RE A *LUCKY GUY*, KEN! YOU'RE A *LUCKY GUY! LUCKY GUY! LUCKY..*"

YOU *BET* I'M *LUCKY*, WALT! LUCKY TO HAVE *FOUND OUT* ABOUT YOU AND JEANNE *IN TIME!*

THE NEXT MORNING YOU'RE UP AT THE CRACK OF DAWN...ANXIOUS TO GET STARTED! AT BREAKFAST...

I'VE *NEVER HUNTED MOOSE BEFORE*, KEN! I UNDERSTAND THEY CAN BE *PARTICULARLY VICIOUS!*

A WOUNDED BULL CAN BE *VERY DANGEROUS*, WALT! WELL! WHAT SAY WE *TRY OUR LUCK?*

AND NOW YOU'RE OUT THERE IN THE DESERTED WOODS WITH HIM, AREN'T YOU, KEN? HIS BRIGHT RED MACKINAW IS GOING TO BE A *PERFECT TARGET*, ISN'T IT? YOU WALK ALONG IN SILENCE...WAITING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY...

HOLD UP A MINUTE, WALT! I JUST THOUGHT OF SOMETHING!

WHAT?

WE'D STAND A BETTER CHANCE OF SCARING UP A MOOSE IF WE *SEPARATE!* HOW ABOUT YOU BEARING LEFT...AND I'LL GO RIGHT! THEN WE'LL CIRCLE AROUND AND MEET FURTHER ON...

GOOD IDEA, KEN! OKAY! SEE YOU LATER!

WALT MARCHES OFF INTO THE WOODS TO THE LEFT! YOU WATCH HIM GO, HIS RED MACKINAW FLASHING THROUGH THE BRUSH! YOU BRING YOUR RIFLE TO YOUR SHOULDER... AIM DOWN THE LONG BARREL...
YOU WAIT UNTIL HE HITS AN OPEN SPOT! THEN... AS THE BLOTCH OF BRIGHT RED CROSSES YOUR GUN-SIGHTS, YOU SQUEEZE THE TRIGGER...
BLANG!
THE REPORT ECHOES THROUGH THE SILENT FOREST! A FRIGHTENED CROW RISES FROM A TREE-TOP AND FLIES OFF SCREAMING! WALT TURNS, WIDE-EYED! YOU'VE MISSED...
KEN! FOR GOD'S SAKE...
YOU TAKE BETTER AIM, THIS TIME! WALT SHOUTS AN OBJECTION AS YOU PULL THE TRIGGER AND HIS CRY IS CUT SHORT BY THE BLAST...
TWANG!
KEN! I...CHOKE!
HE DROPS TO THE GROUND! YOU FLING YOUR RIFLE AWAY IN REVULSION OVER YOUR NEFARIOUS DEED AND EDGE TOWARD HIM! WALT LIES FACE DOWN IN AN EVER-WIDENING POOL OF BLOOD...
I...I'M RID OF YOU... YOU DIRTY...
A CRASHING BEHIND YOU MAKES YOU TURN! YOUR BLOOD FREEZES IN YOUR VEINS WHEN YOU SEE IT COMING AT YOU... A RED-EYED WOUNDED BULL MOOSE...
GOOD LORD!
AND YOU'RE ROOTED TO THE SPOT AS THE BEAST CHARGES AT YOU...ITS HEAD LOWERED... ITS LETHAL ANTLERS POINTED...
YAAAAAAAAAA!
AS DEATH COMES... RELIEVING THE SUFFERING OF YOUR GORED AND BROKEN BODY... YOU KNOW THAT, ALTHOUGH YOUR FIRST SHOT MISSED WALT, YOUR AIM WAS TRUE! AND IT WAS YOUR FIRST MOOSE... TOO!
THE END

THE SECOND PROBLEM ■ THIS PAIR OF E.C. QUICKIES IS...
GIVEN: THE SAME TRIANGLE!
TO FIND: ANOTHER WAY OUT!
METHOD:

MURDER THE HUSBAND!

ALL THE WAY UP TO THE LODGE, YOU FINGER THE REVOLVER YOU'VE BOUGHT FOR THE PURPOSE! YOU'RE *NERVOUS*, AREN'T YOU, WALTER? IT'S A *DESPERATE* PLAN, ISN'T IT?...

WELL, HERE WE ARE, WALT! SAY, YOU'VE NEVER *BEEN* HERE BEFORE, HAVE YOU?

NOT MUCH SENSE COMIN' UP DURING THE *SUMMER*, KEN! YOU *KNOW* I *DON'T SWIM!*

THAT'S WHY IT'S SUCH A DESPERATE PLAN, EH, WALTER? YOU *CAN'T* SWIM A STROKE... AND YET YOU *PLAN* ON HAVING A *BOATING ACCIDENT!* OR, AT LEAST, *KEN* WILL HAVE A BOATING ACCIDENT...

SAY, KEN! HOW ABOUT ROWING OUT TO THAT BOTTOMLESS SPOT IN THE LAKE? I HAVE AN IDEA!

SURE THING, WALT! IT'S TOO LATE TO DO ANY HUNTING TODAY ANYWAY!

WHAT'S YOUR IDEA?

I'D LIKE TO FIND OUT JUST *HOW* DEEP THAT SPOT *REALLY IS!* ALL I NEED IS SOME *HEAVY WEIGHTS* AND A *LOT OF ROPE!* DO YOU THINK YOU *HAVE* ANY?

YOU'RE PRETTY *CLEVER*, AREN'T YOU, WALTER? KEN NEVER *SUSPECTS* THE *REAL* REASON YOU NEED THE WEIGHTS AND THE ROPE, DOES HE? IT'S NOT LONG BEFORE YOU'RE *OUT* THERE... THE [illegible] OF YOU... *OVER THE SPOT...*

LUCKY I HAD THIS *ROLL OF WIRE*, WALT! WE'RE GOING TO USE IT TO USE IT TO LIGHT UP THE DOCK NEXT SUMMER! IT'LL DO INSTEAD OF ROPE, WON'T IT?

IT'S *PERFECT*, KEN!

THERE'S OVER *TWO HUNDRED FEET* HERE! FRANKLY, I DON'T THINK IT'LL BE *LONG* ENOUGH!

IT'S LONG ENOUGH FOR WHAT *I* HAVE IN MIND, KEN! AND THESE *HEAVY PIPES* WILL DO *FINE!*

YOU PULL OUT YOUR REVOLVER AND YOU WATCH KEN'S FACE PALE! HE STARES AT YOU... DUMBFOUNDED...

WALT! I...I DON'T *GET* IT! WHY THE *GUN?*

I'M GOING TO *KILL* YOU, KEN! IT'S THE *ONLY WAY! JEANNE* AND I ARE *IN LOVE!*

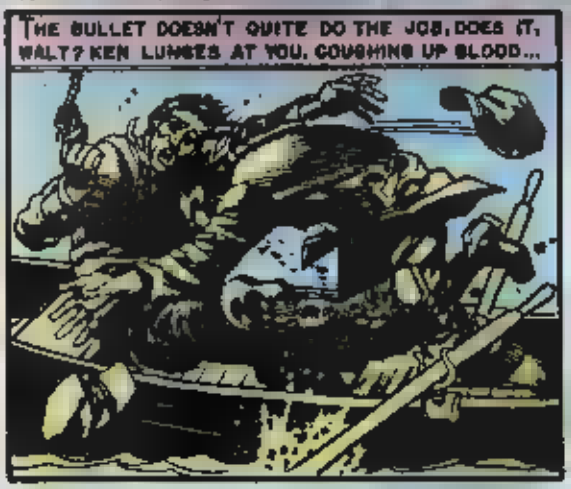
YOU... AND JEANNE!

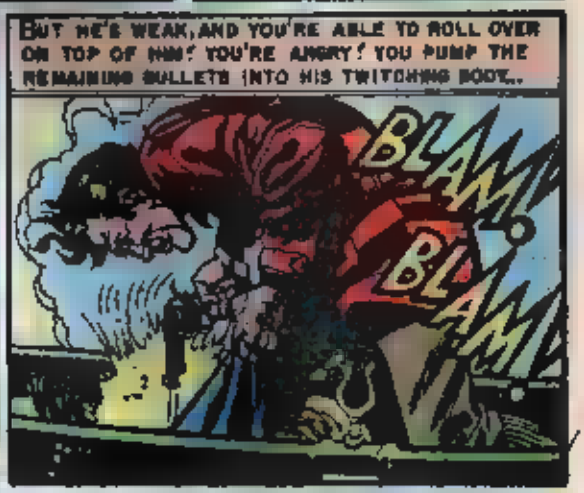
THAT'S RIGHT, KEN! I *KNEW* YOU'D NEVER GIVE JEANNE A DIVORCE, SO I'VE DECIDED ON *THIS!* YOU'RE GOING TO *HAVE* A LITTLE 'ACCIDENT'! THEY'LL NEVER FIND YOUR *BODY*... JUST YOUR BOAT... *ADRIFT...*

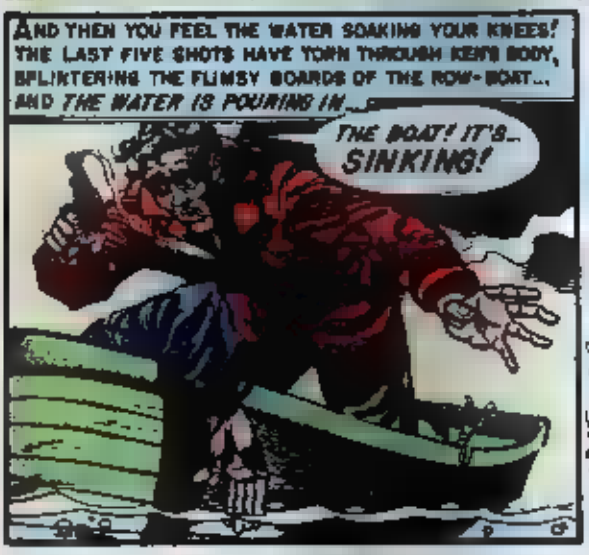
AND THEY'LL KNOW I DIDN'T GO OUT ON THE LAKE WITH YOU...BECAUSE I'M AFRAID OF BOATS! I CAN'T SWIM!
YOU'RE CRAZY, WALT! THIS IS INSANE!

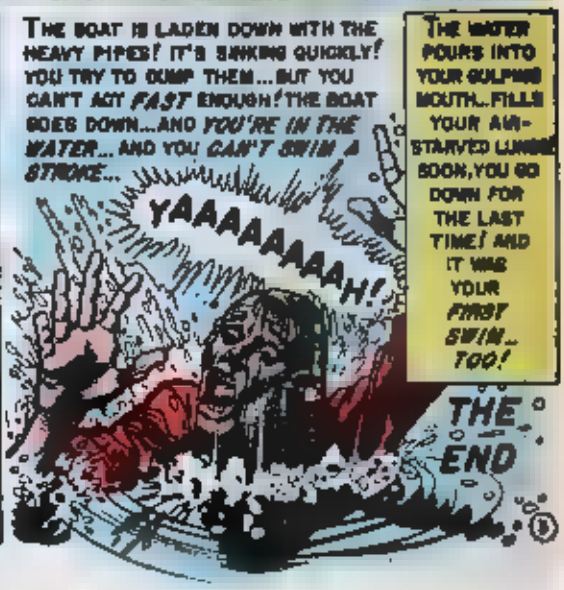
AFTER I SHOOT YOU, I'M GOING TO TIE THESE HEAVY PIPES TO YOUR BODY AND THROW YOU OVERBOARD... THEN ROW BACK AND SET THE BOAT ADRIFT!
WAIT, WALT! PLEASE! I...

BUT YOU DON'T WAIT, DO YOU, WALTER? YOU SQUEEZE THE TRIGGER AND WATCH KEN'S EXPRESSION FREEZE AS THE SLUG RIPS INTO HIM...


THE BULLET DOESN'T QUITE DO THE JOB, DOES IT, WALT? KEN LUNGES AT YOU, COUGHING UP BLOOD...


BUT HE'S WEAK, AND YOU'RE ABLE TO ROLL OVER ON TOP OF HIM! YOU'RE ANGRY! YOU PUMP THE REMAINING BULLETS INTO HIS TWITCHING BODY...
BLAM!
BLAM!


AND THEN YOU FEEL THE WATER SOAKING YOUR KNEES! THE LAST FIVE SHOTS HAVE TORN THROUGH KEN'S BODY, SPLINTERING THE FLIMSY BOARDS OF THE ROW-BOAT... AND THE WATER IS POURING IN...
THE BOAT! IT'S... SINKING!


THE BOAT IS LADEN DOWN WITH THE HEAVY PIPES! IT'S SINKING QUICKLY! YOU TRY TO DUMP THEM... BUT YOU CAN'T ACT FAST ENOUGH! THE BOAT GOES DOWN... AND YOU'RE IN THE WATER... AND YOU CAN'T SWIM A STROKE...
YAAAAAAAAH!
THE WATER POURS INTO YOUR GULPING MOUTH... FILLS YOUR AIR-STARVED LUNGS SOON, YOU GO DOWN FOR THE LAST TIME! AND IT WAS YOUR FIRST SWIM... TOO!
THE END

SNOOZE TO ME!

I'D SUSPECTED IT FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, BUT I WOULDN'T ADMIT IT TO MYSELF! A WOMAN DOESN'T LIKE TO FIND OUT THOSE THINGS... ESPECIALLY WHEN HER YEARS ARE BEGINNING TO SHOW! BUT THAT NIGHT WHEN I WAITED UP FOR HERBERT, THE WHOLE THING CAME TO A HEAD! IT WAS ABOUT THREE A.M. WHEN THE BEDROOM DOOR FINALLY OPENED...

HUH? WHY, *NANCY!* YOU'RE *STILL UP!*

RATHER *LATE* FOR A *BUSINESS CONFERENCE*, ISN'T IT, HERB?

HERBERT SAT DOWN ON THE BED BESIDE ME AND SMILED...

I'M *SORRY*, DEAR! A COUPLE OF THE BOYS SUGGESTED A FEW HANDS OF *POKER*, AND *BEFORE I KNEW IT*...

YOU'RE *LYING* TO ME, HERBERT! I WASN'T BORN *YESTERDAY!* BESIDES... YOUR *COLLAR* IS *SMEARED WITH LIPSTICK!*

AS I SAID, A WIFE DOESN'T LIKE TO FIND THAT HER HUSBAND IS CARRYING ON WITH ANOTHER WOMAN! FOR SEVERAL MONTHS I'D BEEN CLOSING MY EYES TO THOSE TELL-TALE INDICATIONS THAT I'D LOST MY APPEAL FOR MY HUSBAND...

LIP... LIPSTICK! W-WHERE!

THERE! ON YOUR COLLAR! WHO IS SHE, HERB?

OH, THAT! THAT'S NOTHING, NANCY! CRESTWOOD'S WIFE VISITED THE OFFICE TODAY! I...I BUMPED INTO HER COMING OUT OF THE ELEVATOR! I GUESS SHE MUST HAVE...

I SAID DON'T LIE TO ME, HERBERT! I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU AND THAT... THAT WOMAN!

YOU'RE CRAZY, NANCY! I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!

I CALLED THE OFFICE THIS AFTERNOON, HERB! YOUR MR. WRESTWOOD DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT A BUSINESS CONFERENCE!

GOOD LORD, NANCY! I HOPE YOU DIDN'T TELL HIM ABOUT IT! HE WASN'T INVITED! THIS WAS STRICTLY SECRET! HIGGINS AND I ARE COOKING UP A DEAL...

WHERE WAS THE CONFERENCE, HERB? AT HIGGINS'S HOUSE ...OR AT THE OFFICE...

WHY...ER... NEITHER! WE MET AT MY CLUB! WE DIDN'T WANT ANYONE TO...

IT'S NO GOOD, HERB! I CALLED YOUR CLUB! I CALLED THE OFFICE, TOO! I CALLED HIGGIN'S AT HIS HOME! HE WAS HOME ALL EVENING! WHO IS SHE, HERB?

HERB KNEW HE WAS CAUGHT! HE GOT VERY RED... STARTED TO RAVE...

ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! IT'S TRUE! EVERY WORD OF IT! THERE IS ANOTHER WOMAN! AND I'M CRAZY ABOUT HER!

I'LL NEVER GIVE YOU UP, HERB! YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY PLENTY TO GET RID OF ME!

I GUESS WE STARTED TO SHOUT AND SCREAM AT EACH OTHER! WE MADE THREATS, POURED OUT INSULTS! SUDDENLY, THE BEDROOM DOOR SWUNG OPEN AND MY MAID EDITH PEERED IN...

I...I THOUGHT YOU CALLED ME, MADAM!

SOB...SOB! N-NO, EDITH! I...I DIDN'T CALL... SOB... SOB...

I'M GETTING OUT, NANCY!

I SHOT A FURTIVE GLANCE AT EDITH! SHE BLUSHED! SHE WAS EMBARRASSED BY THE TICKLISH SITUATION SHE'D WALKED IN ON...

I...I'M SORRY I DISTURBED YOU, MADAM! I'LL...

NO! WAIT! DON'T GO, EDITH!

YES! STAY, EDITH! KEEP MRS. CHASE COMPANY! I'LL GO!

HERB SLAMMED SOME THINGS INTO A BAG AND HEADED TOWARDS THE DOOR...

IF ANYONE WANTS ME, I'LL BE AT MY CLUB! AS FOR YOU, MRS. CHASE, YOU CAN DEAL WITH ME THROUGH MY LAWYER! I'M STARTING DIVORCE PROCEEDINGS!

NO! HERB! WAIT! DON'T LEAVE! I FORGIVE YOU! I FOR...

THE BEDROOM DOOR BANGED SHUT CUTTING OFF MY PLEA! THERE WAS A MOMENT OF SILENCE... POOR EDITH STOOD WITH HER HEAD BOWED... SHIFTING UNCOMFORTABLY FROM ONE FOOT TO THE OTHER...

HERB! SOB! HERB! HERB!

SLAM!

FINALLY I COULD CONTROL MYSELF NO LONGER! I FLUNG MYSELF UPON THE BED AND BEGAN TO CRY HYSTERICALLY...

HE...HE'S LEFT ME... OH, EDITH... SOB... SOB... SOB...

EDITH CAME AND SAT DOWN BESIDE ME! SHE BEGAN TO COMFORT ME! EDITH HAD BEEN MY MAID FOR TWO YEARS! SHE'D BEEN BOTH SERVANT AND COMPANION TO ME DURING THAT TIME...

DON'T CRY, MA'AM! HE'LL COME BACK! IT'S JUST A LOVER'S QUARREL!

SOB...SOB... THERE'S ANOTHER WOMAN, EDITH!

EDITH SEEMED SHOCKED! FOR A MOMENT SHE DREW BACK...

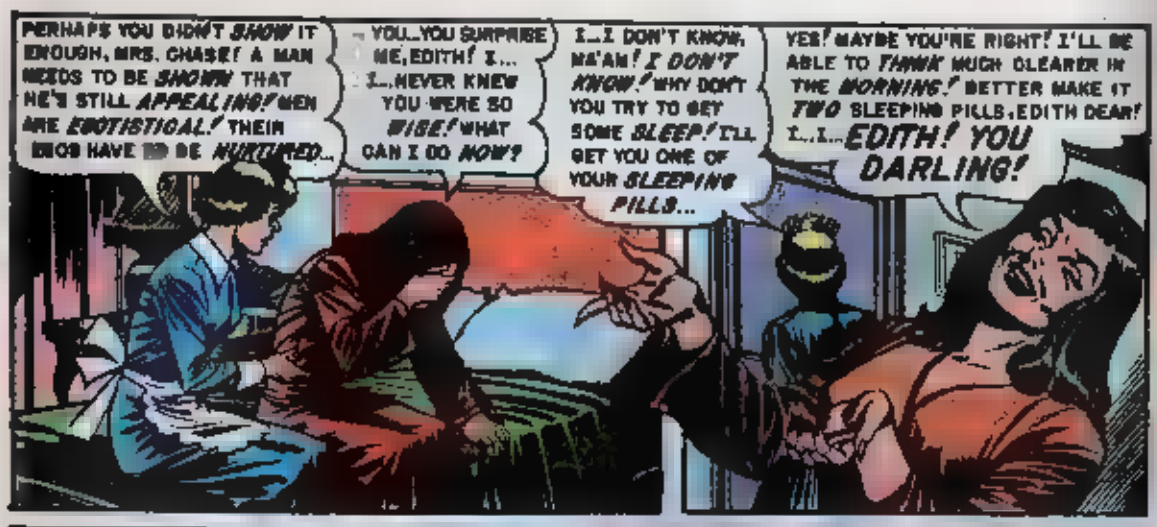
YOU DIDN'T KNOW, DID YOU, DEAR? YOU THOUGHT EVERYTHING WAS PEACHES AND CREAM BETWEEN HERB AND ME! YOU DIDN'T THINK A THING LIKE THIS COULD HAPPEN, DID YOU?

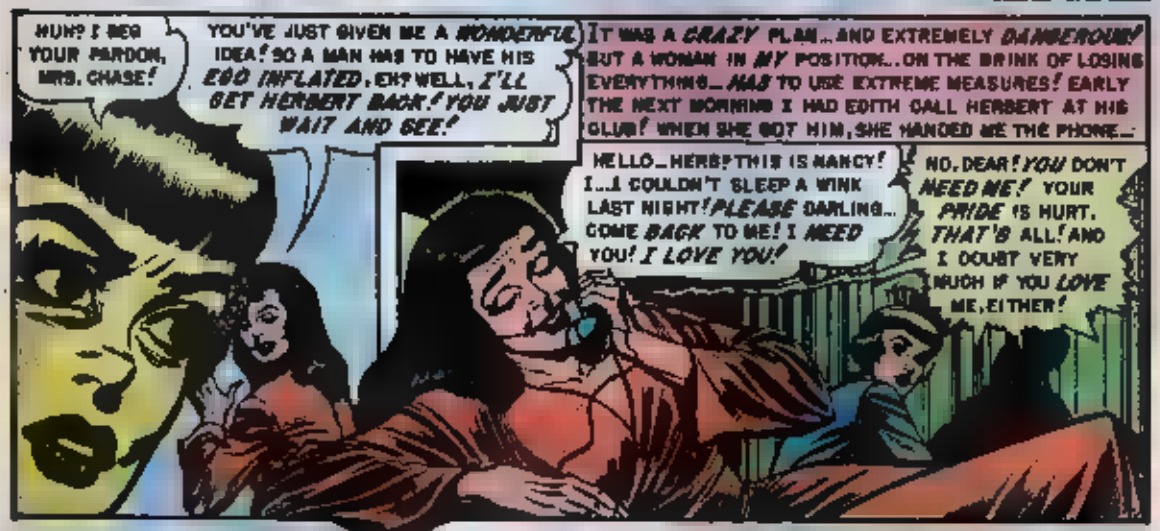
I...I'M SORRY, MRS. CHASE! I WASN'T AWARE...

EDITH BEGAN TO COMFORT ME ONCE MORE! SHE BEGAN TO TALK, TOO! AND THE GIRL MADE SENSE!

THESE THINGS HAPPEN, MRS. CHASE! WHEN A MAN NEEDS AFFECTION AND HIS WIFE DOESN'T GIVE IT TO HIM, HE LOOKS ELSEWHERE!

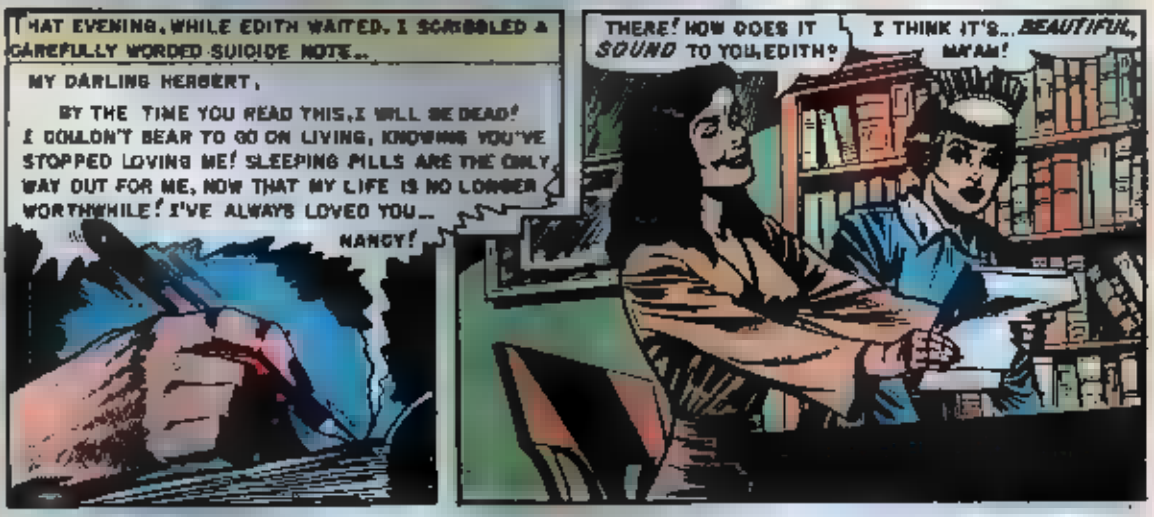
BUT...SOB... HOW ANGRY I LOVE HIM, EDITH!


PERHAPS YOU DIDN'T SHOW IT ENOUGH, MRS. CHASE! A MAN NEEDS TO BE SHOWN THAT HE'S STILL APPEALING! MEN ARE EGOTISTICAL! THEIR EGOS HAVE TO BE NURTURED...
...YOU...YOU SURPRISE ME, EDITH! I... I...NEVER KNEW YOU WERE SO WISE! WHAT CAN I DO NOW?
I...I DON'T KNOW, MA'AM! I DON'T KNOW! WHY DON'T YOU TRY TO GET SOME SLEEP! I'LL GET YOU ONE OF YOUR SLEEPING PILLS...
YES! MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT! I'LL BE ABLE TO THINK MUCH CLEARER IN THE MORNING! BETTER MAKE IT TWO SLEEPING PILLS, EDITH DEAR! I...I...EDITH! YOU DARLING!


HUH? I BEG YOUR PARDON, MRS. CHASE!
YOU'VE JUST GIVEN ME A WONDERFUL IDEA! SO A MAN HAS TO HAVE HIS EGO INFLATED, EH? WELL, I'LL GET HERBERT BACK! YOU JUST WAIT AND SEE!
IT WAS A CRAZY PLAN...AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS! BUT A WOMAN IN MY POSITION...ON THE BRINK OF LOSING EVERYTHING...HAS TO USE EXTREME MEASURES! EARLY THE NEXT MORNING I HAD EDITH CALL HERBERT AT HIS CLUB! WHEN SHE GOT HIM, SHE HANDED ME THE PHONE...
HELLO...HERB? THIS IS NANCY! I...I COULDN'T SLEEP A WINK LAST NIGHT! PLEASE DARLING... COME BACK TO ME! I NEED YOU! I LOVE YOU!
NO, DEAR! YOU DON'T NEED ME! YOUR PRIDE IS HURT, THAT'S ALL! AND I DOUBT VERY MUCH IF YOU LOVE ME, EITHER!

I PUT IT ON...THE WHOLE ACT! I SOBBED LIKE A BABY, AND THEN I SAID IT...
I...I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT YOU, HERB! I'LL...I'LL KILL MYSELF IF YOU DON'T COME BACK! COMMIT SUICIDE!
AW, CUT IT OUT NANCY! YOU'RE JUST BEING DRAMATIC!
HE HUNG UP! EDITH STARED AT ME...
YOU...YOU WOULDN'T DO THAT...WOULD YOU, MA'AM? KILL... YOURSELF?
NOT REALLY, EDITH! BUT I HAVE A PLAN!
I THINK HERB WOULD BE CONVINCED IF I DID ATTEMPT SUICIDE! I'LL LEAVE A NOTE AND EVERYTHING! I'LL TAKE SLEEPING PILLS! THE WHOLE BOTTLE...
NO! I WON'T LET YOU, MRS. CHASE!

DON'T WORRY, EDITH! JUST AS SOON AS I TAKE THEM, YOU'LL CALL AN AMBULANCE! THEY'LL GET THE THINGS PUMPED OUT OF ME AND HERBERT WILL BE CONVINCED!
I'M AFRAID, MRS. CHASE!
COME, COME, DEAR! DON'T BE! IT'S BOUND TO WORK! THERE'S NO DANGER! IT TAKES A LONG WHILE FOR SLEEPING PILLS TO KILL YOU!
AND THEY REALLY CAN PUMP THEM OUT BEFORE THEY TAKE EFFECT!
THAT'S RIGHT! THINK OF WHAT HERBERT WILL SAY WHEN HE FINDS OUT I TRIED TO KILL MYSELF BECAUSE OF HIM! HE'LL COME RUNNING BACK!
I'M... I'M SURE OF IT, MA'AM!


THAT EVENING, WHILE EDITH WAITED, I SCRIBBLED A CAREFULLY WORDED SUICIDE NOTE...
MY DARLING HERBERT,
BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS, I WILL BE DEAD! I COULDN'T BEAR TO GO ON LIVING, KNOWING YOU'VE STOPPED LOVING ME! SLEEPING PILLS ARE THE ONLY WAY OUT FOR ME, NOW THAT MY LIFE IS NO LONGER WORTHWHILE! I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU...
NANCY!
THERE! HOW DOES IT SOUND TO YOU, EDITH?
I THINK IT'S... BEAUTIFUL, MA'AM!

I PROPPED THE NOTE UP NEXT TO MY BED AND OPENED THE BOTTLE OF SLEEPING PILLS...
NOW, REMEMBER, EDITH, DEAR! FIRST CALL THE AMBULANCE! THEN CALL MR. CHASE AND TELL HIM! AND ACT IT UP, WILL YOU, DEAR! SOB A BIT! PLAY SHOCKED!
I'LL DO MY BEST, MA'AM!
I STARTED SWALLOWING THE PILLS! I THINK I COUNTED TWENTY-EIGHT! EDITH WATCHED ME, GASPING WITH EACH ONE...
PLEASE, MA'AM! THAT'S ENOUGH!
ONLY TWO TO GO, HONEY! YOU... YOU CAN GO CALL THE AMBULANCE, NOW!

EDITH WENT OUT OF THE ROOM AND I LAY BACK ON MY BED! I BEGAN TO FEEL A LITTLE NUMB...

EDITH! DID YOU CALL?

YES, MA'AM!

EDITH CAME BACK INTO THE ROOM AND SAT DOWN ON THE BED NEXT TO ME! SHE LOOKED A LITTLE HAZY! THE PILLS WERE BEGINNING TO HAVE THEIR EFFECT...

NOW...GO...CALL... MR. CHASE, EDITH! TELL... HIM... YOU JUST... FOUND ME...

I CALLED HIM ALREADY, MA'AM!

I BEGAN TO FEEL AS IF I WERE PARALYZED! EVERY MUSCLE IN MY BODY BEGAN TO ACHE! THE ROOM BEGAN TO SPIN...

THE *HOSPITAL*... EDITH! NOW... GASP... LONG... DID... THEY... SAY... THEY'D... GASP... TAKE?

I *DIDN'T CALL* THE HOSPITAL, MRS. CHASE! *I'M NOT GOING TO*...

SOMEONE LOOMED UP IN BACK OF EDITH! IT WAS HERBERT! HE GRINNED DOWN AT ME...

HERBERT... GASP! TO-CALL... AN *AMBULANCE*! I... I'VE JUST... SWALLOWED... *SLEEPING... PILLS... TWENTY-EIGHT... OF... THEM!*

I *KNOW*, NANCY! YOU'VE BEEN *VERY COOPERATIVE!*

I *TOLD* YOU IT WOULD WORK, *HERB, DARLING!*

HERB... GASP... *DARLING!*

YOU *WANTED* TO KNOW WHO THE *OTHER WOMAN WAS*, NANCY? WELL... YOU'RE *LOOKING* AT HER!

EDITH! GASP! *YOU*... AND... *HERB*...

THAT'S *RIGHT*, MRS. CHASE! AND THANKS FOR THE *SUICIDE NOTE!* IT'S OUR *PERFECT ALIBI!*

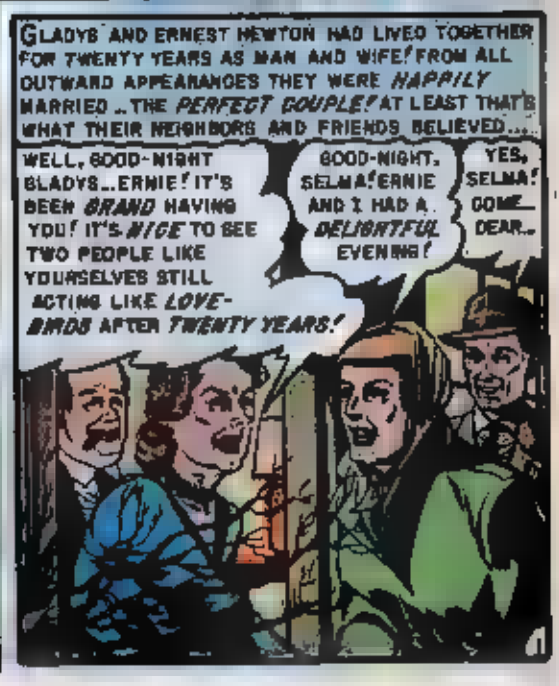
EVERYTHING IS GOING BLACK NOW! IN A FEW MORE MINUTES, I'LL BE GONE TO SLEEP FOR GOOD! EDITH AND HERB ARE STANDING, ARM IN ARM, WATCHING ME! CLEVER EDITH! I'D UNDERESTIMATED HER...

THE END

THE HAUNT OF FEAR

GREETINGS, GORES AND GHOULS! WELCOME ONCE AGAIN TO THE HAUNT OF FEAR! AS YOU KNOW, IN EACH ISSUE OF CRIME SUSPENSTORIES, I LIGHT THE FIRE UNDER MY CRUDDY CAULDRON AND BREW A TALE OF TERROR FOR YOU! YEP! IT'S YOUR HOSTESS, THE OLD WITCH! COME IN! MY REEKING RECIPE IS STEAMING AND SMELLING! I SEE IT'S TIME TO BEGIN DISHING OUT MY SAVORY SERVING OF SHIVERS! SO HERE GOES! I CALL THIS DISGUSTING DISH...

PARALYZED!



YES! THAT'S WHAT THEIR NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS THOUGHT... THAT GLADYS AND ERNEST WERE TWO MIDDLE-AGED LOVE-BIRDS! ACTUALLY, THEY DESPISED EACH OTHER, BUT GLADYS WAS TOO PROUD A WOMAN TO LET THE TRUTH BE KNOWN! ERNIE, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD REACHED THE END OF HIS ROPE! THAT'S WHY, AS THEY DROVE HOME, HE ANNOUNCED...
I'M LEAVING YOU, GLADYS! I'VE PUT UP WITH THIS PHONY PLAY-ACTING LONG ENOUGH! I'M THROUGH... AS OF TONIGHT!
I WON'T LET YOU WALK OUT ON ME, ERNEST! THINK WHAT OUR NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS...
I DON'T GIVE A HOOT WHAT THEY THINK! I'VE TAKEN ALL I'M GOING TO TAKE! IT'S BEEN LIKE THIS FOR FIFTEEN YEARS NOW! WELL...TONIGHT I'M ENDING THIS FARCE!
THAT'S IT! THINK ABOUT YOURSELF! FORGET ABOUT ME...MY REPUTATION! IT DOESN'T MATTER TO YOU IF I BECOME THE LAUGHING STOCK...
NO IT DOESN'T! I'M FINISHED WORRYING ABOUT WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK! I AM THINKING ABOUT MYSELF! I DESERVE A LITTLE OUT OF LIFE! I'M ALMOST FIFTY! THERE... GLADYS! LOOK OUT!
ERNIE! I CAN'T STEER!
EEEEEE!
THE CAR LURCHED CRAZILY, SKIDDING ACROSS THE HIGHWAY! FOR A SPLIT SECOND, THE NIGHT AIR WAS FILLED WITH THE SCREAMING OF BRAKES! THEN COME THE SICKENING THUD... THE SHATTERING CRASH... AS TWO TONS OF STEEL AND GLASS PLOWED INTO THE ADVERTISING BILLBOARD AT THE SIDE OF THE ROAD...
Be Happy
Go Lucky
THE POLICE CAR DREW UP, AND TWO OFFICERS LEAPED OUT...
I TOLD YOU IT WAS A WRECK! I HEARD AL!
WHAT A MESS! C'MON!
WHAT...WHAT HAPPENED?! I...I... ERNEST!
I CAN'T MOVE! I'M PARALYZED!
THEN THERE WAS DEAD SILENCE! FROM OFF IN THE DISTANCE, A SIREN BEGAN TO WAIL...DRAWING CLOSER! INSIDE THE WRECKED AUTOMOBILE, ERNEST STIRRED...OPENED HIS EYES! HE LOOKED AROUND...LISTENING FOR A MOMENT! THEN...
GLADYS! YOU ALL RIGHT? SPEAK TO ME!
OOOOOOOOOHH!

HEE, HEE! GOSH, ISN'T THAT NICE, DEAR READER? JUST WHEN ERNIE DECIDES TO WALK OUT ON PROUD GLADYS, THERE'S AN AUTO WRECK... AND GLADYS FINDS SHE CAN'T MOVE! NOW YOU CAN'T VERY WELL WALK OUT ON A PARALYZED WIFE, CAN YOU, FIENDS? HUH? OH! WELL, ANYWAY, ERNIE COULDN'T...
IS... IS IT PERMANENT, DOCTOR? WILL SHE EVER WALK AGAIN?
CAN'T SAY FOR SURE, ERNEST! THESE SPINE INJURIES ARE SO VAGUE! SHE MAY RECOVER THE USE OF HER LEGS!
YES! GLADYS COULDN'T WALK AFTER THAT! SHE WAS CONFINED TO A WHEEL-CHAIR... PARALYZED FROM THE WAIST DOWN...
YOU NEEDN'T STAY IF YOU DON'T... SOB... DON'T WANT TO, ERNIE! SOB! I CAN GET ALONG BY MYSELF!
I... I'LL STAY, GLADYS! YOU NEED ME NOW!
SO THEIR NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS NEVER FOUND OUT THE TRUTH ABOUT THE 'LOVING' COUPLE! IN FACT, QUITE THE OTHER WAY AROUND...
SUCH A SHAME! AND THEY WERE SO HAPPY, TOO!
HE'S SO DEVOTED TO HER! SHE'S VERY LUCKY!
HE EVEN PREPARES HER MEALS FOR HER! SUCH LOVE!
BUT BEHIND THE WALLS OF THEIR 'LOVE-NEST', THE FIGHTING AND BICKERING WENT ON...
WELL I'M ENTITLED TO ONE NIGHT OUT A WEEK! I'M COOPED UP WITH YOU EVERY DAY!
IS IT MY FAULT THAT I CAN'T WALK? I'M AFRAID TO BE LEFT ALONE! SOME PROWLER...
HERE! I BOUGHT IT TODAY! IF YOU'RE SO AFRAID, KEEP IT NEAR YOU WHILE I'M GONE!
GASP! A GUN!
WHEN YOUR PROWLER SHOWS UP, JUST SQUEEZE THE TRIGGER! WELL! SEE YOU IN A COUPLE OF HOURS!
ERNEST! WAIT! PLEASE! I'M AFRAID! I... I...

BUT ERNEST DIDN'T WAIT! HE STAMPED OUT OF THE HOUSE AND SLAMMED THE DOOR! AND POOR GLADYS WAS LEFT ALL ALONE! IN FACT, SHE WAS LEFT ALONE OFTEN AFTER THAT! SOMETIMES TWICE A WEEK! AFTER ALL! A MAN NEEDS A LITTLE REST FROM CATERING TO A WOMAN HE DESPISES, DAY AFTER DAY AFTER DAY...
GOING OUT AGAIN, ERNEST?
THAT'S RIGHT, GLADYS! I'M GOING TO TAKE IN A MOVIE! I'LL BE BACK ABOUT ELEVEN!
BUT THAT NIGHT...WHEN ERNEST ARRIVED AT THE MOVIE THEATER...
OH, BLAST! I FORGOT MY WALLET! ER... HOW MUCH TIME IS THERE TILL THE LAST SHOW STARTS?
ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES, SIR!
ERNIE HURRIED BACK TO THE HOUSE! IF HE MOVED FAST, HE COULD STILL MAKE IT! BUT AS HE BURST IN THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR...
BASP! ERNIE!
HUH? GLADYS!
GLADYS STOOD BEFORE THE RADIO... TUNING A STATION! HER WHEEL-CHAIR SAT EMPTY... ABOUT TEN FEET BEHIND HER...
YOU...YOU CAN WALK!
YES...YOU FOOL! I CAN WALK! I'VE ONLY PRETENDED I WAS PARALYZED! I EVEN FOOLED THE DOCTOR!
WHY, GLADYS? WHY DID YOU DO THIS?
YOU THREATENED TO LEAVE ME! I WAS AFRAID OF WHAT OUR NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS WOULD SAY!
SO YOU DELIBERATELY WRECKED THE CAR?
I WANTED TO KILL US BOTH!
4

YOU'RE MAD! INSANE!
THEN, WHEN I SAW THAT I'D FAILED, I DECIDED TO ACT BADLY HURT! I KNEW THAT... IF I WERE HELPLESS, YOU WOULDN'T LEAVE ME!
WELL, NOW I KNOW THE TRUTH, GLADYS... AND I'M GETTING OUT!
NO YOU'RE NOT, ERNEST! I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU! I CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE YOU TELL EVERYONE WHAT YOU FOUND OUT! I COULDN'T LIVE IT DOWN!
GLADYS! PUT DOWN THAT GUN!
YOU'RE GOING TO DISAPPEAR, ERNEST! NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW I'VE BEEN FAKING MY PARALYSIS!
DISAPPEAR?
I'M GOING TO KILL YOU...THEN BURY YOU IN THE CELLAR!
YOU'RE CRAZY, GLADYS! YOU'LL BE CAUGHT!
ME, ERNEST? YOU FORGET! I'M PARALYZED! HOW COULD A PARALYZED WOMAN DRAG A BODY INTO THE CELLAR AND BURY IT? THEY WOULDN'T EVEN THINK TO LOOK!
B-BUT...WHAT WILL YOU TELL THEM HAPPENED TO ME?
I'LL TELL THEM YOU JUST DISAPPEARED! THAT YOU WENT OUT TO THE MOVIE TONIGHT AND THAT YOU NEVER CAME HOME...JUST VANISHED!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, GLADYS?
I'M TURNING UP THE RADIO SO THE NEIGHBORS WON'T HEAR THE SHOT!

HEE, HEE! WE INTERRUPT THIS STORY TO BRING YOU A SPECIAL RADIO PROGRAM, DESIGNED TO DROWN OUT SHOTS! IF YOU'RE TIRED OF ANYONE...ANYONE AT ALL...JUST TUNE US IN... ANY-TIME! WE ALSO ANSWER REQUESTS! BLUDGEON-DROWNING-OUT-PROGRAMS! KNIFING-DROWNING-OUT-PROGRAMS! STRANGLING-DROWNING-OUT-PROGRAMS! WE CAN FILL YOUR EVERY NEED! LIKE GLADYS, THERE! WE'VE JUST FILLED HERS...
GLADYS STARED DOWN AT THE LIFELESS BODY OF HER LATE HUSBAND, ERNEST...
I WON'T HAVE YOU RUINING MY REPUTATION! I WON'T! I WON'T!
THEN SHE DRAGGED HIS CORPSE INTO THE CELLAR AND DUG A SHALLOW GRAVE IN THE SOFT-SOIL FLOOR...
OH, I'LL BE THE TALK OF MY FRIENDS NOW! 'POOR PARALYZED GLADYS! HER HUSBAND DISAPPEARED! MAYBE KIDNAPPED!'
GLADYS DID A LITTLE DANCE AS SHE PATTED THE SOIL BACK DOWN, FLAT ONCE MORE...
...AND PRETTY SOON I'LL TAKE A TRIP TO ONE OF THOSE MINERAL-WATER HEALTH RESORTS AND STAGE A 'MIRACULOUS RECOVERY'!
THE NEXT NIGHT, GLADYS HAD A VISITOR...
I NOTICED THE CANDLE BURNING IN YOUR WINDOW, MRS. NEWTON! I JUST CAME OVER TO SEE...WHY... YOU'VE BEEN CRYING!
IT'S ERNEST... MY HUSBAND, MRS. STARK! HE...HE DISAPPEARED LAST NIGHT! I'M FRANTIC... SOB...I'M SO WORRIED ABOUT HIM!
DISAPPEARED? OH, DEAR...
HE WENT OUT TO A MOVIE ABOUT SEVEN, AND HE NEVER CAME BACK! I HAVEN'T HEARD A WORD FROM HIM! I...SOB...I'M AFRAID THAT MAYBE... MAYBE...HE'S BEEN KIDNAPPED... OR MURDERED!
DON'T FRET, MRS. NEWTON! HE'LL COME BACK! DON'T THINK SUCH AWFUL THINGS!
I PUT THE CANDLE IN THE WINDOW...HOPING... SOB... PRAYING...

HEE, HEE! OH, HOW THE NEIGHBORS WERE *CONCERNED* OVER MR. NEWTON'S STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE! THEY *FLOCKED* TO POOR PARALYZED GLADYS'S HOUSE *DAILY!* THE *CANDLE* GLADYS PLACED IN THE WINDOW EACH NIGHT BECAME A *SYMBOL* OF HER *HOPE*...

ONE NIGHT...

IT'S BEEN *THREE MONTHS* NOW! I THINK IT'S SAFE! TOMORROW I'LL PHONE FOR RESERVATIONS AT *TEPID SPRINGS!* THEN...

THE CANDLE STOOD IN THE WINDOW... FANNED BY THE COOL EVENING BREEZES! GLADYS'S HEAD BEGAN TO NOD! SHE FELL ASLEEP! THE BREEZE INCREASED! THE FLIMSY CURTAINS BEGAN TO BLOW! SUDDENLY A TINY WHISP OF FLAME SHOT UPWARD ACROSS THE DRAPES...

GLADYS AWOKE TO FIND THE ROOM IN FLAMES...

GOOD LORD! I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!

GLADYS TRIED TO STAND! HER LEGS BUCKLED! THE WHEEL-CHAIR SHOT OUT FROM BENEATH HER...

AAAAAAAAAAAH!

AS GLADYS PLUMMED AWKWARDLY TO THE FLOOR, SOMETHING SNAPPED! SOMETHING IN HER *BACK!* SHE TRIED TO GET UP! HER *MUSCLES* WOULD NOT *RESPOND!* SHE TRIED TO *CRY OUT*, BUT *NO SOUND CAME!* FOR GLADYS HAD *BROKEN HER SPINE*... AND *NOW*... SHE *ACTUALLY WAS PARALYZED!* SHE LAY *HELPLESS*... UNABLE TO *MOVE*... WATCHING *HORRIFIED* AS THE *FLAMES* DREW *CLOSER* AND *CLOSER*...

HEE, HEE! YEP! THEY *FOUND* GLADYS'S CHARRED AND BLACKENED REMAINS IN THE RUINS OF HER HOME! AND, *MY*, HOW THE *NEIGHBORS DID TALK!* ONLY IT DIDN'T DO *GLADYS* MUCH GOOD... WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY! POOR GLADYS! THE NEIGHBORS HAD BEEN *SO* KIND, SHE'D BEEN FORCED TO *STICK* TO THE WHEEL-CHAIR FOR *THREE MONTHS! THAT'S* WHY HER *LEGS BUCKLED* WHEN SHE TRIED TO *STAND UP!* IF *YOU* WERE EVER *CONFINED TO BED* FOR, SAY, A *WEEK OR TWO*, AND THEN ALLOWED TO *STAND UP*... YOU'D *KNOW* WHAT I *MEAN!* 'BYE NOW! GUY E.O.!